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The Truth in Christian Science

By HERBERT ERNEST CUSHMAN, A.M., Ph.D.

HISTORY OF ANCIENT PHILOSOPHY. Translated from the German of Wilhelm Windleband. One volume, cloth, $2.50.

The Truth in Christian Science

A Lecture before The College Club, at Boston, Massachusetts

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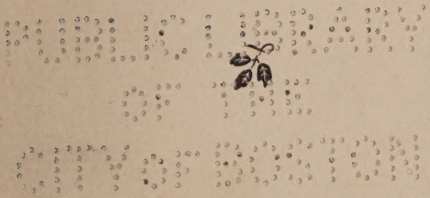

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Contents

PAGE

I. Introduction 9

II. The Social Aspects of Christian Science
a) Christian Science as Individualism . 16
b) Christian Science as Practical Idealism 22

III. Christian Science and its Literature . 31

IV. Christian Science and the Healing of Disease 35

V. The Philosophy of Christian Science
a) The General Mystical Argument . 41
b) The Criticism of Mysticism, especially of that Form of it represented by Christian Science . 51
1. Christian Science does not account for the Present World . . . 52
2. Christian Science lacks the Essential Factor of Mysticism . . 55
3. Christian Science is Self-Destructive 59

The Truth in Christian Science

I

Introduction

TO one who is interested at all deeply in philosophical subjects, the treatment that Christian Science has received at the hands of its contemporary opponents seems very inadequate and often grossly unfair. Its critics have hardly taken it seriously; and, in such an attitude of mind, abuse and misapprehension have usurped the place of calm analysis and candid dissection

of the philosophical basis upon which the doctrine stands. As one Christian Science teacher has said, "Its most bitter opponents have been those who have known the least about it"; — as, indeed, it has often been true in philosophical matters that the bitterest antagonism comes from partial knowledge of any subject in controversy.

In the present instance, a great deal of the abuse has emanated from the professional physician. One might suppose, at first blush, that he would be well authorized to criticize the subject. Upon a little examination, however, it is easy to see that the physician would be almost the last person in the world to give a judicial opinion on the matter. To be sure, he might compare the relative number of cures that he has made with those of the Christian Scientist. But as yet, no such careful comparison has been instituted, and outsiders have a suspicion that the regular physician emphasizes the professional blunders of the Christian Scientist and conceals his

own. If the cases of failure on the part of the regular practitioner during the course of a single year were widely advertised, — failure to give the proper medicine; failure correctly to diagnose the case, as in the illness of President Garfield; failure to make a right prognosis of the case, as in that of President McKinley, — the world would rise up in indignation that it had been so badly used.

We grow indignant over any unmistakable exaggeration. I do not believe that the indiscriminate crusade which *materia medica* has carried on against Christian Science has resulted in any thing else than, on the one hand, to advertise the Christian Science doctrine, and, on the other, to impeach the judicial authority of the regular physician. The reasons for this are (1) that no careful and correct comparison of the results of the two practices has been made; and (2) the deeper reason that, inasmuch as Christian Science is at basis a philosophical concern,

the average regular physician is incompetent to discuss it.

Popular criticism has often found its expression in some such literary writing as the article by Mark Twain in *The Cosmopolitan* some time since. The article was intended to ridicule Christian Science, and accomplished its end by emphasizing, in the inimitable humorous manner of the author, the inconsistencies of the doctrine. The question naturally arises, after reading such a caricature, Can not any thing, any body, any doctrine, be caricatured? Is there any existing thing that does not have apparent inconsistencies? A caricature is always merely negative, and therefore is not convincing. Indeed, if one is not on pleasure bent, but is seeking serious information on any matter, intentional levity, especially in the case of a deep religious concern, is resented. The popular articles of J. M. Buckley, LL.D., that have appeared now for many years, have also lacked scientific

temper; and while the learned gentleman makes a show at exposition of the errors of the Science which he opposes, he so mingles abuse and inaccuracy with his argument that even the most patient reader sets it aside as incompetent.

Popular opinion, moreover, has its say directly on the subject; but popular opinion is hardly to be relied on in such matters, since it often gets its cue from the literary writers.

My reason, therefore, for presenting a statement of the Christian Science theory is that the opportunity is still open for a candid analysis of it.

We must remember that we cannot afford to deal with a matter of this sort other than seriously; — if for no other reason, because to a large number of earnest-minded people it is a matter of religion. For our own sakes, indeed, we can never afford to treat any religious or philosophical belief in other than the mood in which the devotees

themselves accept it. The Christian Science Church, founded in 1866 (the first society founded in 1879) has had a most extraordinary growth. In 1900 it had more than 100,000 members enrolled, and 500,000 adherents. In 1901 it organized 83 churches, and on January 1, 1902, it had 663 church organizations. In fact, it is growing at so rapid a rate that it is impossible at any particular time to give any reliable statistics concerning the number of its members. It is a cosmopolitan body reaching from Alaska to London. There are Christian Scientists in Brazil, in Germany, and in the Philippines. No church organization in modern times has had so rapid a growth. The members come from all classes of society, and they seem to be willing to give untold wealth to their cause. This organized body is one, therefore, that must be reckoned with, both now and in the future; and scoffs and sneers at it are evidence of neither good manners nor good sense.

This Introduction will explain — if any explanation be necessary for so obvious a course of conduct — the serious and respectful treatment that is given to the theme in the following pages.

II

The Social Aspects of Christian Science

a) Christian Science as Individualism.

IN the first place, Christian Science is a reaction from the ecclesiasticism of the present period, and represents individualism in religion. This will not seem obvious at the first glance. It is not plain that the period in which we live is ecclesiastical, nor is it obvious how Christian Science means individualism. Nevertheless, such is the state of things. It is notorious that at the present time the denominations are complaining that the people do not go to church; the theological schools complain that few young men are willing to study for the ministry. The cause

in both cases is the same, and it is this: the church has grown more and more hide-bound and formal. It has become rigid in worship, and offers little scope for individual initiative. It has tried in vain to atone for this by laxity in doctrine. In worship, the individual is obliged either to conform to a rigid ritualism, as in certain churches, or, as in others, he sits idly in the pew while the minister conducts the worship for him. Consequently, having no play for his individuality in the conduct of the worship, he has gradually refused to attend church at all. The churches thus show little growth, and the opportunity and demand for ministers is limited. Young men looking forward to a profession refuse to enter the ministry, where, as individuals, they can have so little freedom.

Now, Christian Science represents a reaction against this church traditionalism, and includes among its members those who have refused to go to any of the conventional churches on account of the conformity

required, and also those who, while still church-goers, have found the conformity irksome. New life was demanded, and the dead ecclesiastical shell could not be reanimated. The new wine could not be poured into old bottles. A new church has been formed, in which every individual carries on the worship. No one can attend a Christian Science service without feeling how universal is the worship in the pew, nor can any one attend the usual Protestant church service without feeling how much of the worship is done by proxy. The Christian Science service consists of music, and of parallel readings from the Bible and Mrs. Eddy's book, while the interpretation must be made by each member who participates. The prayer is silent and therefore individual.

There is evidence of this individual religious feeling in the practical use that is made of the religion. The regular Protestant service seems artificial when one thinks how little

portion of the week-day life it occupies or influences. But the Christian Scientist has as the constant theme of his thought, conversation, and activity what his religion has done for him. He feels continuously the spiritual eminence it has given him.

Looked at from a social point of view, the Christian Science movement is a social reform. It represents the protest of the individual. It finds its counterpart in many epochs in history, — as in the revolt of Luther from the Roman Catholic Church, in the revolt of Wesley from the English Church, and in many other ecclesiastical crises. It is an antidote for the poison in the blood of the church, and as such I, for one, sympathize with it heartily. The boom is now on, to use a western phrase, and I look to see this new church attain considerable proportions. The individual's religious life has been starved, and now we find the individual rising to a full consciousness of his power. The central doctrine of Christian Science, to wit :

that God is *the real* in the life of every individual, although, as we shall see, it is a very old doctrine, has given to the modern man a new sense of his immortality and greatness. He finds himself great even in his routine and menial work, and he revolts against the traditionalism which has practically obscured his greatness to himself. Even his health, his life, according to this new church's teaching, rests in his own power. He denies the claims of heredity, environment, and disease, and in his enthusiasm the individual is ready every-where to shake off the shackles that have seemed to limit him. The denial of the existence of matter is only the other form of this self-arrogation.

If this emphasis upon individuality had not taken this religious form, it would have taken some other at the present time. History is matter of ebb and flood — individualism, then traditionalism, then individualism again. Trace the course of history and see if this is not its process. Sometimes the tradition-

alism or the individualism is scientific in expression, — sometimes political, sometimes philosophical. Whatever the character of the expression, human history vibrates between these two poles.

To-day individualism must express itself, and it finds religion its best medium. After the current "boom" in this direction is over, — perhaps long after you and I have departed hence, — traditionalism will again resume its sway. Every body of individuals has to organize, as this church has done; but later on the organization and forms will be emphasized at the expense of individual expression. It has always been so. Already there is a Reformed Christian Science Church in Washington with a large number of adherents, which represents a revolt against the form of worship implied in the adoration of the person of Mrs. Eddy.

b) *Christian Science as Practical Idealism.*

This movement is not only a reaction against ecclesiasticism, but, as its name indicates, against materialism as well. Ecclesiasticism and materialism are not of necessity companions, but in the present period of civilization they happen to be such.

In the term materialism, as we roughly use it here, are included all those forms of human activity that are non-idealistic, from the ordinary forms of commercial life to the achievements in practical science. Any occupation may become materialistic in temper if the higher ideals are wanting to it and it exists for itself alone. There is hardly space within the limits of this lecture to define more fully the concept of materialism. It is sufficient to say that human aims are substantially materialistic when they do not reach beyond and beneath the passing phenomena of human existence. Practically, a materialist

does not have to form any theoretical materialistic view of the ultimate constitution of the world, such as Lord Kelvin's theory of the world as composed of atomic rings, or as Descartes' theory of the identity of space and matter. Such views are elaborated only by metaphysicians. Men are practically materialists when they have no ideals whatsoever, and when their lives are given over to pleasure, self-aggrandizement, money-making, or any end that does not rise above what the senses may perceive.

It is possible that the fact may have escaped the notice of some that the close of the eighteenth century was idealistic in all its best products. Some of its ideals were capricious and mad, as those of the French; some were expressed in a rich literature, as, for example, the works of the German romanticists; and this romantic, idealizing spirit flowed over into the first two decades of the nineteenth century. But the fall of Napoleon, who was the great idealizer of that

romantic time, marks the beginning of the nineteenth century's materialism.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century two movements started which have not yet finished their course. These could not color the activity of that century other than with materialism. One of the movements arose out of the necessity for a minute division of labor on account of the growth in inventions and labor-saving machinery, and it resulted in the aggregation of people into great cities, the world over. The other was on the theoretical side, in the development of the doctrine of evolution. The last century therefore was characterized by mental absorption in the details of life; and the new situations, both social and theoretical, demanded all the attention of even the most active minds. There was no time for ideals. The pressing moment employed all the world's energy of thought. Consequently the nineteenth century was one of hurry, specialization, "common sense," development of the

means for giving comfort to manual labor and for satisfying material need. When such a social spirit has run its course we may naturally look for a reaction, and the Christian Science movement is the first symptom of the coming change in social life. In the spirit of prophecy, we see in it the crude beginning of the release of busy man from the problems of a busy world.

It is not surprising that the reaction from materialism, as expressed by Christian Science, is extreme. Christian Science denies the existence of matter. It is a bold and flat contradiction of the very basis of modern activity. It does not make a difference of degrees in objects, but draws a sharp line between matter and spirit. Spirit is, matter is not. Theoretically there certainly is not the slightest equivocation in the Christian Science doctrine. The call is "Back to Christ," — back to the spirituality of the beginning of this era. Christian Science, to use the words

of its devotees, is "demonstrable Christianity." It is a "spiritual understanding of the words of the Scripture,"—a phrase which reminds us of Origen and the Gnostics. In other words, we are to look for the omniscience, omnipresence, and omnipotence of God.

There is, therefore, a distinctly religious and unequivocal spiritual basis for this belief; and one should note that, in order to emphasize this basis to the last degree, the Christian Scientists have always disclaimed any relation whatsoever to sects which, to an outsider, seem in doctrine to resemble Christian Science. For example, Christian Science is held to be quite different from mental science. Mental science claims no special revelation, but finds an historical basis for its theory in ancient philosophy. It is, therefore, a philosophy of life. It does not deny the existence of matter, but, "even admitting that the whole cosmos is, in the last analysis, but one Universal Mind, . . . still matter has its own relative reality and validity, and is not to be ignored

as illusion." Nor is Christian Science to be identified with divine healing. This latter is based on the theory that healing is accomplished by the prayer of faith to a personal God. Christian Science holds, on the contrary, as its primal tenet that man and God are not distinct principles, but only one principle. There is only One; that is God, or Mind, — and that art *thou*." Christian Scientists deny that the phenomena of their religion can be explained by hypnotism and mesmerism, because the human will has in itself no power. There is no will save that of God.

The upshot of the whole matter is contained in the simple statement that God as spirit alone exists. From this premise it follows that all else is symbolical. Men are brothers, but they are more, — they are one in God; they are He. Salvation, therefore, is from all that earthly is, because the earthly is not in reality: it is only an illusion. So sin, disease, death are but illusions; and this

salvation Christ, who was God as He most purely appeared in human form, came to bring. Mrs. Eddy defines Christian Science thus: "It is the law of God, it is the law of good, interpreting and demonstrating the law of eternal harmony."

Were I called on to classify and label Christian Science on its theoretical side, I should say that it is the modern version of that great principle of Mysticism which was introduced into Europe from the East when Alexandria was the center of culture. There have been many European representatives of this Eastern doctrine, and its presentation has differed in the hands of these Europeans according to the needs of their times. Plotinus, Meister Eckhart, and Spinoza were Mystics; but the Mystical doctrine also appears in Saint Paul, Thomas à Kempis, Luther, and Walt Whitman.

It will thus be seen that Christian Science is akin to many mighty theories; and those who have any prejudice against it may object to

such a classification. But no historical objection can be raised if one will take the trouble to analyze the theories which I have named. Christian Scientists claim that their doctrine is unique; that there is nothing like it. But this claim can have no weight with an historian of philosophy. On its practical side, — that is, its healing of disease by prayer, — it has had predecessors from time immemorial. On its theoretical side, — the aspect of Christian Science that most interests us here, and is in fact its most important aspect, — it is not unique. Indeed, the Mystical principle of Christian Science is identical with one aspect of a flourishing Christian sect of to-day, namely, of the Methodist Church.

I realize the danger of making a classification of this sort. The several theories I have mentioned differ in many important particulars. My only excuse for leaving the classification in so dogmatic a manner is that historical perspective is thus given

to the subject under discussion. All of the above named theories involve the Mystical element. They also have their own points of divergence from Mysticism. A discussion of Christian Science involves, therefore, a presentation of the doctrine of Mysticism in general, and of the variation or divergence from Mysticism peculiar to Mrs. Eddy's philosophy. This consideration will follow in due course.

III

Christian Science and its Literature

UP to this point, I have attempted to show what place Christian Science occupies in our modern social life. It is a social movement toward religious individualism and toward idealism. In other words, it represents, as has been shown, a great social reaction against ecclesiasticism and materialism. In spite of its claims as a unique and original revelation, it is historically linked to very many similar movements. The world has often seen its like before, after society had lapsed into a state of materialism similar to that lately prevalent.

With this understanding of the social status and importance of the Christian Science movement, let us turn to examine somewhat

the philosophy and practice of the movement itself.

Like any other socio-religious philosophical tendency, it has expressed itself in two ways: (1) in its practical results upon the lives of its communicants; (2) in its theoretical ideals. By the fruits one knows a theory, and it is equally true that by a theory does one know the fruits. The literature in which the dogma of Christian Science is deposited is easily accessible to us. Besides the many treatises on the subject written by professed Christian Scientists, Mrs. Eddy herself has formulated her theory in her book, "Science and Health," which is authoritative for all Christian Scientists. She has written, in addition, many dissertations to explain and extend the doctrine developed in her "Science and Health." Among these are "Rudimental Divine Science," "Christian Science versus Pantheism," "No and Yes," and others.

I do not agree with those critics who find Mrs. Eddy's literary style wooden and un-

attractive. To me it is full of rich imaginations whose disorder and mixture partly veil and partly reveal the meaning that she is attempting to express. She deals in paradoxes, but so do all Mystics. To condemn her paradoxes is to condemn the whole body of Mystical literature. The obscurity of statement, frequent faultiness of diction, and obvious ignorance of the meaning of many of the terms which are used, is offset by a large sweep in the movement of the language.

I do not find the difficulty with Mrs. Eddy's literary style that others find, for one gets used to lack of style in philosophical writings where the thought is difficult to express. The fault is perhaps deeper than crudeness of expression. The fault in the Christian Science literature is rather inadequacy and incompleteness of thought. The statements of Christian Science are as yet immature and incomplete. There is an apparent lack of knowledge of the logic of the situation. Believing their theory to be unique, how

could the Christian Scientists study the history of their doctrine and its implications? May I say that instead of believing, as many do, that there is no truth in Christian Science, or at best but a small truth, I am sure that Christian Science embodies a much profounder truth than Mrs. Eddy or any of her followers realize. If any one is interested in the subject that Christian Science tries to express, he should not read Mrs. Eddy's books to find it profoundly stated, but Plotinus' "Enneads," Spinoza's "Ethics," or Deussen's "Elements of Metaphysics." But after all has been said about the inadequacy of the Eddy version of Mysticism, it should be added that among modern religious theories it stands as a relatively important statement of truth.

IV

Christian Science and the Healing of Disease

ANY criticism of the Christian Science movement would not seem orderly unless beginning with some reference to its practical side, — the power of healing. We ought to remember, however, that altogether too much emphasis is laid upon the healing of disease as a part of the general doctrine, both by the opponents and by the adherents of Christian Science. Mrs. Eddy says, "Healing physical sickness is the smallest part of Christian Science. It is only the bugle-call to thought and action in the higher range of infinite goodness. The emphatic purpose of Christian Science is the healing of

sin; and this task is a million times harder than the cure of disease, because, while mortals love to sin, they do not love to be sick. Hence their comparative acquiescence in your endeavors to heal them of bodily ills, and their obstinate resistance to all efforts to save them from sin through Christ, spiritual Truth, and Love, which redeem them and become their Savior through the flesh, from the flesh, the material world, and evil."

It would of course be unfair to criticize this statement on the score of inconsistency, although some say that Christian Science was originally the healing of disease, and that originally the practical side solely was emphasized; that the healing of sin was an after-thought. Probably most people think of Christian Science as a medical creed in religious formulæ. Probably few people have considered the social and philosophical aspects of the subject. Yet we must take the Christian Science doctrine as it stands, and allow a development to it as to any other doctrine.

It has, as it stands to-day, two aspects, the practical and the theoretical; — Christian Science as efficacious for the cure of disease, and Christian Science as efficacious for the prevention of sin. I shall consider the two in succession.

The healers of disease outside the regular physicians are of four classes: (1) mental scientists; (2) divine healers; (3) hypnotists; and (4) Christian Scientists. The divine healers and the Christian Scientists differ in their methods, but are alike founded upon a religious principle. Mental science is a philosophy of life; while hypnotism is strictly scientific. All of these classes of healers except the hypnotists claim to be able to cure all diseases. The hypnotist tries only certain kinds of cases, and he is very careful in the use of his method. It is impossible to compare the number of cures, and the number of failures to cure, in these different schools, for the reason that only the hypnotist keeps a record of his cases. They all certainly cure

disease, and they all experience failure. *They all cure the same kinds of disease, and the same kinds of disease are incurable by them all, so far as can be known.* This goes to show, to one who impartially judges all these schools, that from their methods and from their results there is *a common principle in Christian Science, divine healing, mental science, and hypnotism.* That principle is what the hypnotists have long regarded as the basal principle in their science, namely, *mental suggestion.*

I cannot in the limits of this lecture go into an explanation of mental suggestion, except to say that psychologists mean by it the abnormal control of the mental activity of one person by another person. Christian Science has effected its cures by mental suggestion, — the mind of the healer has controlled the mind of the patient until the patient has grown strong enough to control his own mind. I need not say here that there are very many diseases that are mental in

their origin, nor need I say that mind can influence body. Bergheim, a celebrated French hypnotist, gives a list of 105 diseases of different kinds that he has cured by hypnotism. Among them are 10 kinds of organic diseases of the nervous system, 17 kinds of hysteria, 18 kinds of neuropathic affections, 15 miscellaneous nervous troubles, 3 kinds of paresis, 4 intestinal troubles, 19 kinds of rheumatism, 5 kinds of neuralgia, and several kinds of diseases peculiar to women. I know of a case within a year of the cure of the morphine habit by hypnotism. Hypnotism is used as an anæsthetic in surgery. It is successful in numberless cases of split or double consciousness. Professor H. H. Goddard, who has investigated the subject of mental healing very thoroughly, publishes a table compiled from 414 cases treated by hypnotism by Drs. Van Rhenterghem and Van Eeden. Of these, 71 were absolute failures, 92 were slightly or temporarily helped, 98 were permanently or decidedly ameliorated, 100 were

cured, and 53 had results unknown. The investigations show (1) that the deeper the hypnosis the larger the percentage of cures; (2) that not all cases were cured; (3) that some diseases are less amenable than others to cure by hypnotism.

So far as the practical side of Christian Science goes, we may affirm three things: (1) the Christian Scientist cures some diseases; (2) the cure does not depend on his distinctive method; (3) the principle involved is mental suggestion, which is much more perfectly used by hypnotists.

V

The Philosophy of Christian Science

a) The General Mystical Argument.

A CRITICAL examination of the Christian Science philosophy must begin with a study of the psychology that underlies it. Here, as throughout the entire range of its doctrine, I must repeat that Christian Science is essentially *a philosophical but very inadequate representative of Mysticism.* We shall, however, find it profitable to study the Mystical principles that the Christian Scientist attempts to express; and very likely the Christian Scientist understands the philosophy of his religion as well as most other religious people do theirs.

What the Christian Scientist is seeking in

his philosophy is what all religious and philosophical people are seeking. Their search is for truth, reality, — for something that gives to the transitory things of life a genuineness; for that in which "we live and move and have our being." We all desire to know what is real and what is sham; and amid the mystery of life we all are groping to find that upon which we may rely, that which is eternal, never changing.

"What, then, in human experience, is real, unchanging, eternal?" asks the Christian Scientist. "Sensations," answers the physical scientist. "No," says the Christian Scientist, "sensations are notoriously fickle. They give no certainty. They are continually changing. The iron I touch is warm or cold according as my hand is colder or warmer than it. The same sound will be loud or soft according to my irritability when I hear it. So with all sensations — they all are relative to the state of the body and mind of the person experiencing them."

So also the Mystic, from time immemorable, has urged that the individual's feelings and desires are far from unchanging, far from permanent in their constitution. Even unreflecting people have come to see that the feelings, desires, and emotions are as fickle as the wind. No desire can be permanently satisfied. Satisfied once, it leads to another desire. Appetite is whetted by what it feeds on. Schopenhauer, in his pessimistic way, said that there is nothing satisfactory about the satisfaction of desires; for satisfaction is death both to the desire and to the satisfaction. A new desire comes like a Phœnix from the ashes of the first. The pleasure-hunter goes from this to that, and nowhere finds truth, reality, and unchangingness. If we depended alone on feeling and desire for eternal peace, we should never find it.

But we have not yet exhausted, in our analysis, the realm of our experiences. There is the domain of ideas, which yields to us things or objects external to us. By a

thing I mean a person like John, or an object like a library, or a more complex matter like the Ptolemaic system of astronomy. Certainly those ideas are permanent and unchanging. But are they? asks the Mystic. All that I know of a thing comes from my contact with it — from sensations; and sensations, we have seen, are ever changing. What do I know of a lump of sugar, except that it is white, sweet, granulated, and so on, all of which qualities are sensory? Subtract the qualities from the sugar, and what have you left? My idea of the sugar is made up of these sensations and of the feelings that go with them. That is all that I know of a thing. Ideas do not necessarily represent any thing in the world of reality. Every individual has his own ideas, differing from other individuals' ideas. Ideas, therefore, as composed and built up out of sensations, cannot be anything else than unreal. Man indeed lives in a world of ideas; he depends on ideas for his practical use of life:

but he is never sure that there is anything corresponding to them in fact. For does not science change? Are we not, as a race, the victims of social illusions? We depend on our ideas for practical guidance, but when we come to inquire into the trustworthiness of our guide we find an illusion. How universal is the unsatisfactoriness of life! How inevitable is our remorse when we have reached any point of maturity and looked back! The ideas which we trusted, the things in which we believed, have deceived us. We thought they were real, but we now know them wanting.

I am putting the Mystic's argument in as simple and untechnical a fashion as I can in order to be rid of the technical philosophical terminology. The Eastern Mystical world gives up human knowledge because it believes it vain, and it looks pityingly upon its Occidental brethren because they willfully chase illusions of their own construction.

The intellectual faculties and the bodily

sensations and impulses do not give us the eternal. On the contrary, they yield only phantoms and unsatisfying impressions. Where then shall I look for the eternal? In my search there is one place I have forgotten, — my own Self. I know myself. I am sure of this knowledge. It is the injunction above the Delphic temple: γνῶθι σεαυτόν. It is the certainty upon which Descartes based his philosophy: *cogito ergo sum.* My senses do not tell me of myself; my thoughts and ideas never find it for me. It is an intuitive revelation. Of one thing I am certain — *I am.* Here is reality.

But what *is* this "I," this ego? It is, says the Christian Scientist, Mind. Schopenhauer called it Will. Mystics differ as to the name they give it. It is at any rate a Oneness which quenches all thought, feeling, and strife. But who *am* I? I am Brahma. I am God. This "I" that is myself is the same as the "I" in all other men. In this

are all men alike, however much they may differ in their unreal ideas and sensations. They all alike are real. They all are God. Therefore Mrs. Eddy says, without presenting the reasoning process by which she comes to the conclusion, "All is Mind. . . . The five material senses testify to the existence of matter. The spiritual senses afford no such evidence, but deny the testimony of the material senses. . . . If, as the Scriptures declare, God is All-in-all, then there must be Mind, since God is Mind. Therefore, in divine science there is no material mortal man, for man is spiritual and eternal; he is made in the image of Spirit or God." And Mrs. Eddy continues, "Accepting the verdict of these material senses, we should believe man and the universe to be the foot-ball of chance and sinking into oblivion. Destroy the five senses as organized matter, and you must either become non-existent or exist in Mind only; and this latter conclusion is the

simple solution of the problem of Being and leads to the equal inference that there is no matter."

Rev. Irving C. Tomlinson says: "The Science of Mind has its idea, and this idea, or man, partakes of the nature of his Principle, the Infinite Mind, our God. Numbers have their signs, the figures which represent them. Man has his sign, the human figure, which represents him, Numbers exist in mind as ideas, and are governed by their principle. Man exists in Mind as an idea, and is governed by his Principle. That which is real and substantial in mathematics is not the signs and symbols which are seen, but the principle of mathematics and its ideas. That which is real and substantial in Mind is not the human figure which is seen, but God and his idea, the perfect man — these are real and eternal."

There is a very beautiful passage in the Hindu Upanishads, translated by Professor Lanman and used by Professor Royce, which

states profoundly this central truth of Mysticism:

1.

Verily the universe is Brahm. Let him whose soul is at peace worship it as that which he would fain know.

Of knowledge verily is man constituted. As is his knowledge of this world, so, when he hath gone hence, doth he become. After knowledge then let him strive.

2.

Whose substance is spirit, whose body is life, whose form is light, whose purpose is truth, whose essence is infinity — the all-working, all-wishing, all-smelling, all-tasting One, that embraceth the universe, that is silent, untroubled, —

3.

That is my spirit within my heart, smaller than a grain of rice or a barley-corn or a grain of mustard-seed; smaller than a grain of millet or even than a husked grain of millet.

This my spirit within my heart is greater than the earth, greater than the sky, greater than the heavens, greater than all the worlds.

4.

The all-working, all-wishing, all-smelling, all-tasting One, that embraceth the universe, that is silent,

> untroubled — that is my spirit within my heart; that is Brahm. Thereto, when I go hence, shall I attain. Who knoweth this, he in sooth hath no more doubts.
>
> Thus spake Shandilya — spake Shandilya.

This is the same Mystical notion of the union of individual men that Saint Paul meant, when he said that, as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive. Although Saint Paul qualified his Mysticism in many ways by personifying sin, making sin inevitable, conceiving human nature as dualistic, still his working principle was the essential unity of man and God. If we review the long series of Mystical doctrines in the Middle Ages, read the little book of Thomas à Kempis called the "Imitation of Christ," carefully study the profound philosophical Mysticism of Spinoza, we shall find a large amount of interesting literature teaching the vanity of the world of human ideas and human sensations, — that is, the nothingness of matter and the reality of the

illuminating and unperishing union of the soul of man with the soul of God. The Christian Scientist seems unaware of this literature, and in his exuberance of feeling his exposition of his own doctrine has been affected in two ways: (1) he has stated his theory in a very inadequate form; and (2) he has stated it as if it were something new.

b) *The Criticism of Mysticism, especially of that Form of it represented by Christian Science.*

A criticism of so profound, so thorough-going, and so wide-spread a doctrine as Mysticism — which doctrine the Christian Scientist has as yet unsuccessfully attempted to express — demands more space than the limits of this lecture can afford. But briefly I wish to point out some of the advantages that accrue to such a theory, and some of the defects that necessarily restrict it.

1. Christian Science does not account for the Present World.

In the first place, Mysticism, like all idealism, carries us above the practical "common sense" of life, and in this effort there accrue to it many advantages and many disadvantages. What is its ideal? The Christian Scientist calls it Mind, the Hindu calls it Nirvana, Emerson called it the Over-Soul. Martineau in a caustic way criticizes the Mystical ideal as "a motionless immensity of complacency." All great Mystics point out the futility of attempting to describe this ideal. Is the reason that it cannot be described because it is mere Nothing? No, says the Mystic, it is the opposite of Nothing. It is everything, it is reality. Man's ideas and sensations, and matter, are nothing; but God is real. The life of the flesh is nothing; the life of the soul is everything true. Man in the flesh is laboring under a continuous illusion, and part of that illusion is the notion

that the science of Mind, Nirvana, God-life, absorption in the Over-Soul, is nothing.

Such a theory does not account for this life. It simply thrusts this life to one side, by calling it an illusion. That will not do. A metaphysical theory must take account of all life. You do not solve a problem in mathematics by erasing it from your slate, nor a problem in chess by kicking over the chess-board in vexation. Religion and philosophy are attempts by men to show what place this present life occupies in a larger scheme; they will never satisfy if the emphasis is so placed on the idealistic element involved that the life in which we live is unaccounted for. My criticism is not that Christian Science, like all Mystical theories, finds the world of the senses — the "common sense" world — unreal; but that Christian Science does not account for the unreality of "common sense" in its general scheme of things. Christian Science merely destroys the "common sense" world and then banishes it. It solves its

problem by erasing the problem from its slate. It merely kicks over its chess-board. One can always ask the Mystic, Why are we here!

On the other hand, there is the welcome aspect to all Mysticism — and personally I am glad to see Christian Science in the world to-day — that it calls attention, even if at the expense of common sense, to the idealistic and spiritual side of life. Without ideals the race could not progress, yet ideals are always above the common sense world and out of touch with it. All reform movements in the history of the race have been Mystical and idealistic. "Common sense" and realism were never anything but conservative and unprogressive.

2. Christian Science lacks the Essential Factor of Mysticism.

A second criticism of Christian Science shows to what sublime heights it is possible for the Mystical doctrine to ascend, and what on the other hand are the dangers that assail it, if it does not reach those heights. As we have said, Mysticism is the daring, ambitious, and radical element in human society. Its idealism is of such a nature that it stakes its all upon a single chance. By its insight it must gain all or nothing. No plodding, conservative, scientific, and practical life for it, — no life carefully economizing the fruits of earthly existence! No trudging with weary feet up the rugged height! No, its insight carries it far away from these dusty realms below. It stakes all earth against a heaven, and, if any particular Mystical doctrine does not win this heaven, its fall is great.

The dangers are many to such Mystical aspiration, and nothing reveals more clearly

the littleness and greatness of the Mystical doctrine. It is great if it conceives its ideal in that ideal's possible completeness; and the prominent historical theories of Mysticism have been very great indeed. But it is little if it falls a hair short of reaching its end.

That profounder representative of Mysticism, Plotinus, developed the theory to its logical conclusion. He conceived God to be a being of such transcending power that human beings could not ascribe any attribute to him. The Absolute is beyond all finite definition, wanting nothing, desiring nothing, like a pure light beyond darkness. He is wholly unspeakable and superior to human characterization. To attempt to define Him is to limit Him, even by such terms as Thought or Being. He is not this nor this nor this, and yet is present in all things. Spinoza was so overwhelmed by the glory of God's power that he was called the God-intoxicated man. But Christian Science has fallen short of such an ideal conception of the

Absolute, and it thus fails of the sublimest aspect of Mysticism. Mrs. Eddy speaks of God as harmony, as reason, as good, as law; and scarcely any Christian Scientist would be willing to deny to the deity the attributes of love, wisdom, and freedom. Yet all these are human attributes, and to ascribe them to God is not fully to conceive the mystery that makes his ways past finding out. I say this from the Mystic's point of view, and not from that of one who would find the Absolute revealed in earthly life. In the great Mystical systems, the sublime conception of God has offset in some measure, and thereby justified, the Mystic's denial of all moral distinctions to men.

To deny to God distinctiveness and peculiarity is in a way safe, and is uplifting. This denial the Christian Scientist should make, yet does not. To deny, however, to human life such distinctions is dangerous. But this the Christian Scientist does. This modern expression of Mysticism has, therefore, the

dangers but none of the safeguards possible to the great Mystical teaching.

Consider the consequences of denying the existence of sin and of disease. To deny the existence of sin is to deny the existence of virtue; and to disallow disease is to disallow health. There cannot be good without ill, virtue without sin, health without disease, knowledge without ignorance, heat without cold, white without black. These are correlative terms. They are as mutually necessary as one pole of a magnet is to the other. To deny sin and disease is to deny all moral distinctions whatsoever, and upon moral distinctions is society built.

The littleness of the Christian Science doctrine, its serious danger and menace to society, lies not in its claim to be beyond the pale of the law in its treatment of disease and sin, but in its theory about disease and sin, offset by no supreme Mystical ideal. Such a theory aims a blow at the whole structure of society. It is theoretical moral Anarchism.

3. Christian Science is Self-Destructive.

The last point in criticism of what is fundamental in Christian Science is that if it be consistently carried out it is self-destructive.

I suppose that all finite explanations of the mystery of life are inconsistent — simply because they are finite. The presumption is always against a complete and consistent theory of God and of man's relation to the universe. This indeed is the final statement of philosophy — "in mystery philosophy begins and in mystery it ends." But all theories of the mystery of life are not self-destructive. The criticism against Mystical theories is that essentially they are such. Let me say that, in showing how this is the case, I shall present the great traditional criticism, and not an original one.

The fundamental principle in Christian Science is contrary to our living this life of ours. Suppose, for example, you were placed

in a certain position which made every thing an illusion to you. Suppose you could not alter the conditions, nor your own predicament, so long as you remained in your position. Up seemed down, wrong seemed right. What would be your duty? To get into a different position, of course, where there would be no illusions. From the Mystical point of view, the position above supposed is exactly our situation here in these earthly bodies. The world, the flesh, and the devil are illusions. Our duty is to get rid of such illusions. But the only way to get rid of them is by suicide. The Christian Scientist expressly says that until man is perfect he will be open to illusion. But why, like an insane man, be afflicted with illusions? I am only Mind, and that Mind is God's Mind. All Mystics in continuing to live here on earth are untrue to themselves.

The traditional answer to this is, of course, — suicide would be committing one's self to the greatest of illusions. But I reply,

What does suicide matter, so long as it is an illusion? With no intent of harshness and in perfect seriousness it must be said that the real logic of the Christian Science position — the logic of those who believe that matter does not exist — would compel all Christian Scientists to free themselves from the thralldom of the illusions of matter by one grand suicidal act.

And further: were the Mystical doctrine consistent, not only would all Christian Scientists disappear, but none would ever have existed. Let us see why this is so. Suppose that a certain man comes to believe that sensations and ideas are illusions, and that matter is nothing. That man can never tell his revelation to another man. The only way in which he can impart his revelation to others is through ideas clothed in vocal tones, which set in motion certain atoms, which strike the tympanum of another person's ear, which causes a sensation, which creates ideas. This entire process the Mystic calls an illusion.

Moreover, a Christian Scientist's own idea of Christian Science is an illusion, — because it is an idea. By his own presupposition that all is an illusion except the mind of God, he has forbidden his brain to think his own doctrine of Christian Science because thought is an illusion. Further, he has shut himself off from communicating his doctrine to others, the method of the communication being an illusion.

The consistent Christian Scientist never existed. He cannot think, much less can he be a missionary of what he cannot think. The only logical thing for a Christian Scientist to do is wholly to avoid speech, lest he illude others; never to think for himself, lest he illude himself; and then, in order absolutely to prevent all illusion to himself and others, to commit suicide. I repeat, — not only would all Christian Scientists vanish, if they were consistent, but none would ever have been.

While we declare this of Christian Science, we must remember that our own theories of life, whatever they may be, will also have their difficulties. We all are finite, and no finite theories will stand a searching analysis such as we have here made. By no means do I intend this criticism as a caricature. The only problem before any man, in matters of such ultimate importance as this, is to seek, not for a perfect theory — that being beyond the range of possibilities; but for an ideal that has the fewest inherent difficulties.

The self-destructive character of Mysticism, even in expressions of it that are profounder than Christian Science, stands in the way of its general acceptance. Its neglect to take account of, and explain, our ordinary life in the general scheme of things offers to the theorist an additional objection to its acceptance. Besides, Christian Science does not offer to the world the full value of the Mystical doctrine, while the inadequacy and incompleteness with which it states its case

would cause a student of the subject to turn aside to its fuller development in more historic forms. Again, on its practical side it is not unique, but is one of a large number of practices founded on mental suggestion. As a symptom of our current social life it is of very great importance, and it portends, during the next fifty years, a welcome era of idealism which will take the place of the age of materialism through which we have lately been passing.

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